

Message Text

SECRET

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41

ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 L-03 NEA-10 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SS-15 NSC-10 PRS-01 RSR-01 OMB-01

TRSE-00 /085 W

----- 027757

R 221712 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2101

INFO DOD WASHDC

HQUSAF/ SAFUSI

ESD L G HANSCOM AFB

HQ 3 AF RAF MILDENHALL

CINCUSAFE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 07258

E. O. 11652: XGDS- L

TAGS: PINR, MARR, UK, US

SUBJECT: COBRA MIST

REF: LONDON 7093; 3 AF MSG 211721 Z JUNE 73

1. IN FOLLOWUP MEETINGS 21 AND 22 JUNE, MOD HAS RECONFIRMED WILLINGNESS MOVE FOWARD ON TIGHT SCHEDULE OF CONSULTATION AT CABINET LEVEL (TO BE COMPLETED BY 27 JUNE) AND, ON 28 JUNE, WITH LOCAL MP, LOCAL COUNCILS, EMPLOYEE GROUPS, LABOR UNIONS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES, WITH PRESS RELEASE TO BE MADE 1400 LOCAL (0900 EDT) ON 29 JUNE. WE CONSIDER THIS SCHEDULE AN EMINENTLY REASONABLE ONE FOR A MATTER OF SUCH POTENTIAL SENSITIVITY HERE, AND RECOMMEND US ENDORSEMENT OF IT.
2. MOD HAS REWORKED PRESS RELEASE AND QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SOMEWHAT, LARGELY TO GROUP RESPONSES BY CATEGORY AND ADDRESS QUESTIONS LIKELY TO ARISE HERE BUT, IN OUR OPINION, WITHOUT ANY REAL CHANGE IN SUBSTANCE TO US PROPOSAL (STATE 117692). BRITISH TEXT FOLLOWS:
" UNDER 1967 AGREEMENTS, THE US AIR FORCE, IN CO-
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OPERATION WITH UNITED KINGDOM AUTHORITIES, HAS BEEN CONDUCTING A JOINT PROGRAM OF LONG- RANGE RADIO PROPAGATION RESEARCH AT RAF ORFORDNESS, SUFFOLK. THIS PROGRAM HAS NOW BEEN COMPLETED.

" SINCE THIS PROGRAM STARTED NEW TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC STUDIES CONDUCTED IN THE UNITED STATES INDICATE THAT ALTERNATIVE LINES OF INVESTIGATION WOULD BE MORE COST- EFFECTIVE. IN THIS LIGHT, IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT A FURTHER PROGRAM AT RAF ORFORDNESS CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED AND, CONSEQUENTLY, THAT THE US AIR FORCE WILL NOT RENEW THE CONTRACT FOR THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE EQUIPMENT AS FROM 30 JUNE 1973 AND ALL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM WILL BE PHASED OUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THEREAFTER. THE FUTURE OF THE SITE IS UNDER URGENT CONSIDERATION."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR PRESS OFFICERS:

RESULTS OF RESEARCH:

- THE PROGRAM, KNOWN AS COBRA MIST, HAS PROVIDED AN IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF THE EFFECTS OF THE IONOSPHERE ON LONG- RANGE RADIO PROPAGATION.
- INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED TO IMPROVE THE OPERATION OF FUTURE LONG- RANGE RADIO COMMUNICATIONS AND RADAR SYSTEMS.
- THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN WELL WORTH ITS COST. IT HAS SUPPLIED VITAL INFORMATION WHICH AT THE TIME THE PROGRAM WAS INITIATED WAS NOT AVAILABLE FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE AND COULD NOT HAVE BEEN OBTAINED IN ANY OTHER WAY.
- THE UK HAS SHARED IN ALL RESEARCH DATA.

SITE DETAILS:

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 L-03 NEA-10 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SS-15 NSC-10 PRS-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00

RSR-01 /085 W

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R 221712 Z JUN 73
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2102
INFO DOD WASHDC
HQUSAF/ SAFUSI
ESD L G HANSCOM AFB
HQ 3 AF RAF MILDENHALL
CINCUSAFE

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 07258

- THERE ARE SOME 50 RAF PERSONNEL, 100 US PERSONNEL AND 300 UK CIVILIAN PERSONNEL EMPLOYED AT ORFORDNESS.
 - OF THE CIVILIANS, HALF ARE EMPLOYED BY RCA(GB) AND HALF BY MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OR DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT.
 - THE UK HAS MADE A CAPITAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE COBRA MIST PROJECT OF SOME L.4 MILLION POUNDS STERLING AND SHARED IN THE RUNNING COSTS.
- TIMETABLE FOR CLOSURE:
- THE BEST ESTIMATE AT THIS TIME IS THAT IT WILL TAKE 90-120 DAYS TO CLOSE DOWN THE PRESENT OPERATION.
- DISPOSAL OF ASSETS:
- DISPOSAL OF EQUIPMENT AND ULTIMATE DISPOSITION OF THE SITE IS BEING CONSIDERED BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.
 - THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES CONCERNED WILL BE GIVEN ADVANCE NOTICE OF ANY ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS LIKELY TO ARISE.
 - FOLLOWING CLOSURE OF THE PRESENT OPERATION, IT MAY TAKE SOME CONSIDERABLE TIME BEFORE A DECISION CAN BE REACHED UPON THE ULTIMATE DISPOSAL OF THE SITE.
- RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER WARNING SYSTEMS:

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- ORFORDNESS IS IN NO WAY PART OF BMEWS. FYLINGDALES IS THE UK ELEMENT OF BMEWS AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE SO FOR THE FORSEEABLE FUTURE.
- ORFORDNESS IS ALSO IN NO WAY COVERED BY SALT OR BY ANY OTHER ARRANGEMENTS OR AGREEMENTS: ANY TALK OF A CIA INVOLVEMENT WAS PURE PRESS SPECULATION.
- THE DECISION TO CLOSE DOWN THE OPERATION IS NOT A CONSEQUENCE OF THE RECENT NIXON/ BREZHNEV DISCUSSIONS.
- AS FOR GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR EARLY WARNING OF MISSILE ATTACK, THESE ARE MATTERS WHICH ARE KEPT UNDER CONTINUAL REVIEW BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.

3. REQUEST CONCURRENCE OR COMMENT.

ANNENBERG

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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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30 JUN 2005

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ESD L G HANSCOM AFB
HQ 3 AF RAF MILDENHALL
HQUSAF/ SAFUSI
PM

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